

K MOTIVES FOR THANKFULNESS: *12 9 2*
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A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

COUNTY OF DURHAM,

ON

THURSDAY,

NOVEMBER 29th 1798,

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A

GENERAL THANKSGIVING.

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MOTIVES FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

S. E. R. M. E. S.

COUNTY OF DURHAM

THURSDAY



GENERAL INVESTIGATION

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

BRITISH MUSEUM

S E R M O N.

PSALM lxxviii. 11, 12, 13.

“ THEY KEPT NOT THE COVENANT OF GOD, AND WOULD NOT WALK IN HIS LAW;
“ BUT FORGAT WHAT HE HAD DONE, AND THE WONDERFUL WORKS THAT HE HAD SHEWED
“ FOR THEM: MARVELLOUS THINGS DID HE IN THE SIGHT OF OUR FOREFATHERS IN
“ THE LAND OF EGYPT.”

THE author of this beautiful psalm^a utters many severe but salutary truths: He reminds the Israelites of the several rebellions of their forefathers from the time of Moses to David; and holds out their punishments, as warnings, to bind them to a more faithful obedience to God their Heavenly King: And, to supply them with motives for confidence in the Divine Protection, he expatiates on the various miracles, which, at different periods, God had wrought for the deliverance of his people.

I need not dwell on the occasion of our assembling here this day: But it may tend to quicken our diligence in the christian life, and so in some measure answer the design of this solemnity, if we can be induced to cherish a few pious and grateful sentiments, as they arise in our minds; while we reflect together upon those late instances of God's mercy, by which we of this nation are distinguished. Motives to engage us to yield the grateful return of a good life, motives that spring from national blessings

^a Entitled “a psalm of Asaph;” but whether the composition were his, or whether it were delivered by David to him, to be sung in the service of the Sanctuary, is uncertain. Bishop Patrick thinks it probable that it was composed by Asaph. This Asaph, the son of Berechiah, appears to have been one of the leaders of the Choir: see 1 Chron. vi. 39. and xv. 16, 17. and xvi. 7.

bleſſings ſo recent, ſo freſh in our memories, as theſe are, which we are now called upon to celebrate, ſpeak forcibly to our conſciences ; they muſt be heard, and muſt excite us to join with one heart, and one mouth in ſongs of thankſgiving to the Lord “ who hath delivered us from the “ hand of the enemy.”^b

This day is conſecrated by royal proclamation for an Holy Feſtival ; to be obſerved throughout the Realm, as a day of Thankſgiving to The Almighty, for the repeated Victories vouchſafed to our Fleets ; for the manifeſt interpoſition of his providence, in delivering our country from foreign and domeſtic foes ; and for various “ ineſtimable Benefits received “ at his hands in the courſe of the preſent year.”^c

That “ the race is not always to the ſwift, nor the battle to the “ ſtrong”^d was ſtrikingly exemplified to our benefit in that ſea-fight on the coaſt of Egypt, wherein the Enemy poſſeſſed all the advantages of numbers, force and ſituation. To what then, it may be aſked, muſt we attribute the victory ? To the ſuperior ſkill, or bravery of the Conquerors ? No, ſurely, but to the Lord of Hoſts—the God of Armies : To Him only, who “ faveth not by many or few”^e muſt the Victory^f be aſcribed : To God, who holds the chain of cauſes and effects ; and who, from circumſtances apparently the moſt minute and trivial, is wont to produce, by the ſecret workings of his providence, events the moſt important. Let us not, my Brethren, like the ungrateful Iſraelites, “ forget what He “ hath done, and the wonderful things He hath ſhewed for us !”

Public,

^b Pfalm cvii. 2. ^c Form of Prayer for the Day. ^d Eccleſ. ix. 11. ^e 1 Sam. xiv. 16.

^f The great Victory gained over the French Fleet, in the Bay of Becharia, at the mouth of the Nile, on the firſt, ſecond, and third of Auguſt in the preſent year, by Admiral Nelson, now Lord Nelson of the Nile. In the Letter, which announced the victory, Lord Nelson piously aſcribes it to “ Almighty God.” Here mark the providence of God ! While the nation is offering up its united thanks and praiſe for one great naval Victory, another of no leſs importance ſucceeds—that of Sir John Borlaſe Warren on the twelfth of the October following ; which evidently defeated the Projects of the French in their Attempts to invade Ireland.

Public, national benefits demand general, solemn acknowledgments. And how reasonable this duty of general thanksgiving is may be gathered from our conduct in adversity. When an horrible dread overwhelms our spirits, when we struggle with distresses, whether of a public or private nature, whether they be national calamities, or such as involve individuals only, our prayers and cries for help and assistance are vehement and importunate, in proportion to the greatness of our fears and the impending danger. But when the mercy hath been once vouchsafed, and the alarm is over, how apt are we to sink into a supineness of spirit, a careless negligence; to forget the mercy, and to slight the hand that was so lately stretched out to save us! In private life this ungrateful temper, this forgetfulness of favours prevails, 'tis to be feared, exceedingly towards God as well as man: For, alas! how usual is it with us on the recovery of our health from a fit of sickness—how very apt are we to forget all the good resolutions, we had so lately formed, of leading a more sober, a more religious life for the time to come, should God in mercy raise us up again! “Were there not ten cleansed, but, where are the nine?”^{*}——very apposite, very appropriate to the case before us is this expostulation of our blessed Saviour!

The Israelites, we read, “kept not the covenant of God, and would not walk in his law; but forgot what He had done, and the wonderful works that He had shewed for them.” While we are amazed at those repeated acts of strange Ingratitude, which, with their dreadful consequences, are in this psalm so feelingly described, let us be careful to avoid the Crime lest we share in its Punishment. “With a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm,”^a and signs and wonders poured out the Israelites were freed from Slavery, were rescued from the Enemy. “Then,” indeed, that is, at the instant of the manifestation

^{*} Luke xvii. 17.—Of the many who desire the Prayers of the Congregation when sick, how few are there, comparatively speaking, that remember to come to Church to return Thanks upon their recovery!

^a Numbers xxxiii. 3. and Deut. v. 15.

manifestation of this great deliverance, when they saw the Egyptians "floating on the waves, or dead upon the sea-shore, " then," as it is expressed in another psalm,¹ "believed they his words, and sang "praise unto Him; but," it is added, "within a while they forgot "his works, and would not abide his counsel." "*Forgot!*" ye may exclaim, "how could they forget the hand that led, and that fed "them by a constant succession of miracles of mercies? How could "they forget their Saviour, whom they saw in the Cloud by day, "and in the Pillar of Fire by night"—their Guide, their Shelter "and Guard?" Motives, ye will allow then, were not wanting to keep them firm in their allegiance to their Heavenly King; and to preserve in their minds a lasting remembrance of his goodness. *Redeemed, Protected,*¹ *Clothed, Fed*—Motives these, one should think, abundantly sufficient to ensure a steady obedience, a never failing gratitude. Yet, though they were fed to the full, and though the miracle of the Manna were renewed day by day,^m continually, they *forgot* their Benefactor: They murmured, they despised this food from Heaven, and provoked God to give "them their own desire, when "they required meat for their lust." "But"—mark the punishment of irregular desires—"while the meat was yet in their mouths, the "heavy wrath of God fell upon them."ⁿ

Here let us pause a moment, and endeavour to draw some instruction, for our religious improvement, from this short sketch of the Ingratitude of the Israelites. Let us cease to wonder at the strange conduct of that people, and examine our own: And, first tracing it to its source, let us see whether we ourselves, every one of us, have not made some advances towards this excess of Ingratitude, for which we are so ready to blame the Israelites of old.

Man

ⁱ cvi. 12.

^k Psalm lxxviii. 15. compared with Exodus xiii. 21. and Numbers xiv. 14.

¹ Deut. viii. 4.

^m Exodus xvi. 4. and 35.

ⁿ Psalm lxxviii. 30, 31. compared with Numbers xi. 19—33.

Man is by Nature the child of sin: And, so long as he continues unregenerated by Divine Grace, is invariably found puffed up with a fond conceit of his own excellence; as if Himself, the favourite of Heaven, held his Empire o'er the creatures by some inherent right; and had a natural claim to whatever good he possesseth independently of a Superior Power. From this too exalted notion of his own worth ariseth a forgetfulness, or, rather, a disowning of benefits; and the esteeming them, not, as in truth they are, effusions of undeserved, boundless Love, but, as effects and consequences derived from his own merit.

To Pride, then, fostered by our natural corruption, Ingratitude owes its birth. What wonder is it, therefore, that the Israelites, who alone of all the nations of the earth were so marvellously redeemed, conducted and cherished by their Divine Protector, should be elated with an overweening conceit of their own worth; should yield to the delusions of Pride, and “forget God their Saviour, who had done so great things for them?”

With what severity of rebuke doth our blessed Lord, anticipating their self-justification, address the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees?—“ye say
“—if *we* had been in the days of our fathers, *we* would not have been
“partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore”—he
“adds—“ye are witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them
“that killed the prophets.”^o—*Children*, that is, not only by descent, but by following the deeds of their fathers.

Hence admonished, let the Christian, whoever he be that is “amazed at
“the frequent rebellions of stiffnecked Israel, reflect a little with himself
“how *he* has observed the *baptismal* ‘covenant;’ how *he* has ‘walked in
“the law,’ and with what Gratitude *he* has remembered the ‘marvellous
works’ of Jesus.” “The frequent rebellions of Israel, with the
“Presence

^o Matt. xxiii. 30, 31. compared with John viii. 39—44.

" Presence of God in the midst of them, and his miracles before their
 " eyes, would 'indeed' seem incredible, did not the heart of every
 " self-knowing Christian at once acknowledge the picture, which is here
 " drawn of human nature, its incredulity and perverseness. For hath not
 " God delivered *us*" by his Grace from the Bondage of natural corruption?
 And doth He not guide and support *us* in our Wilderness of life, and in
 our spiritual Wanderings? " Is not Jesus present in the Church, and are
 " not his miracles of love and mercy continually before our eyes, in his
 " Word, and in his Sacraments? Yet who does not still 'provoke,' and
 " tempt the most High? Who does not ask provision for his 'lust' when
 " his necessities are satisfied? And who is there of us, that, after all the
 " proofs he hath had of God's power and goodness, is not apt upon
 " every appearance of danger to be difficult," dissatisfied with his state,
 " and distrustful of Providence? Before we condemn others let us try
 " ourselves, and judge righteous judgment. When David pronounced
 " the words—'the man that hath done this thing shall surely die'—little
 " did he think of being told by his faithful monitor^p—'Thou art the man.'
 " Thus conscience, if duly interrogated, will be a Nathan to every one;
 " and shew him his own transgressions in those of old Israel."^q

But—to pass from private mercies and motives for thankfulness and
 trust in God, to such manifestations of his overruling providence as are
 more evident, those vouchsafed to whole nations—hath not the same
 Jesus, the same Angel of the Covenant saved us by subduing our enemies
 under our feet? He doth not now, indeed, as He did heretofore, conduct
 his people by the Pillar of Fire and the Cloud, those visible symbols of his
 presence and protection; but He is still assuredly the Deliverer, and the
 Guardian of his Church, and of this Nation. For, hath He not saved us
 from both foreign and domestic foes? Doth He not still dispense to us the
 Word of Truth, our spiritual food, pure and unmixed with the leaven of
 Papal

^p 2 Sam. xii. 7.

^q Horne's Commentary on the Psalms.

Papal Rome? And hath He not provided amply for our bodily sustenance, in the abundant harvests with which his bounty hath blessed us? "Thou," O God, our Deliverer! "crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy "clouds drop fatness!"^r

Happiness and misery, we know, are relative terms, and may be increased or diminished by comparison, according to the light in which the contrasted objects are viewed. A just comparison, then, of our present state with that of other nations may serve to increase our thankfulness for the superior blessings we enjoy: For, when we meditate upon the various instances of the Divine Goodness extended towards us, the sense of our own comforts is heightened, and our Motives for Thankfulness become more animating.

While other nations are groaning under the scourge of War, or lamenting the ravages incident to a country that is made the *seat* of War, we have peace in our borders: We are still protected in our lives and property by equal, salutary laws: We hear the voice of War, indeed, but it is only at a distance; for, while our brave soldiers and sailors fight our battles, we can still repose under the shelter of our own homes; and may rest securely, every man in the bosom of his family. From all its accumulated horrors we are freed. We suffer only from the emotions of that generous compassion, that sympathy, that fellow-feeling, which strongly moves every humane, every christian soul to relieve others from those calamities, of which, even when far distant from us, we have so keen a sense ourselves.

With *Health* also, as well as *Plenty* and *Security*, we are blessed: For, while our brethren in America fall a prey^r to "the pestilence that
"walketh

^r Psalm lxx. 11.

^r —alluding to the yellow fever, so fatal for several years past in America, and in the West India Islands.

“ walketh in darkness, and the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day,” no plague comes nigh our dwelling : Neither the Sword, nor the Pestilence, nor the Famine is permitted to approach our Land. How long their fury shall be restrained from us God only knoweth, who dispenseth his judgments and his mercies as may best suit the subjects of them ! but this we *do* know, that if, with thankfulness of heart for his unmerited blessings, we use them to his honour, in rendering unto Him the grateful tribute of a good life, they shall be continued to us. Let us “ not be high-minded, but fear.”

Bear with me a little, while I pursue a theme so animating ; which who but lightly touches, must feel the flame of gratitude kindling within him, and exalting his soul to praise and adoration.

To the Motives for Thankfulness already mentioned let me add *our enjoyment of civil, and religious liberty*—of the *former* to such extent, and in such proportion as have been long proved to be best calculated to promote the happiness of individuals, and the welfare of the State—of the *latter, absolutely, and without restraint* : For *this* is, truly, the inalienable right of reasonable, and accountable agents ; and, therefore, not to be wrested from them without doing violence to their nature. *Here*, every man may attach himself to whatever sect, or division of professing Christians he sees fit ; and may unite in that mode of social Divine Worship, to which his Conscience shall direct him : That is, every one may, in this nation, worship God in his own way ; for to God only he is, in this respect, accountable. But, however, he is bound so to demean himself as not to offend against the laws of his Country : And this line of conduct every good member of the Community will be careful to pursue ; considering, that, to spread opinions destructive of the peace of Society, and the *settled order* of things is to scatter firebrands and death.

To

* Psalm xci. 6.

* Romans xi. 20.

To many thousands of sufferers for Conscience's sake—that is, for the sake both of *civil* and *religious opinions*—our Land hath now, for almost these " eight years, been an happy Asylum : And I trust that our Land is also the *School* of the persecuted ; that the objects of our Hospitality are led to examine the merits of that Religion, which their benefactors profess, and wherein we differ from them ; that they will thereby be convinced of their errors, and gradually led to renounce them ; and that, when, in his own good time, God shall be pleased to restore them to their native land, they will, with one heart and mind, unite to establish among their countrymen sound Doctrine, and a purer form of Divine Worship.

Let us not, my Brethren, neglect, or slight the advantages of *our* so much *purser* form of Divine Worship ; nor, like the Israelites, despise our heavenly food, the Bread of Life, the Gospel of Salvation, of which their Manna was only a Figure, and prefer to it the visions of a vain Philosophy :^x Let us rather endeavour, by adhering stedfastly to our Profession, in all virtue and godliness, and under the influence of that zeal which the Apostle recommends,^y to extend the Knowledge of the Christian Faith : And, while we thus work together with God in promoting the great ends of his providence, let us rejoice that we are counted worthy of being made the happy Instruments of his Mercy, of conveying to our fellow-creatures his choicest blessing, pure, undefiled Religion, founded on Humility, Faith, and Charity.

The

^w Since the tendering of the *first* oath to the French Clergy : The Decree of the National Convention which exacted this oath is dated November 27, 1790.

^x " It is to be hoped, we shall never live to see a time, when the miracles of our Redemption shall be forgotten ; when the return of Jesus Christ from heaven shall be despaired of ; and when the people shall *solicit their teachers to fabricate a new, philosophical deity* for them to worship, instead of the God of their ancestors, to whom glory hath been ascribed from generation to generation." — Horne's Commentary on the Psalms, Psalm cvi. — Melancholy Forebodings of the Infidelity of the present day !

^y Romans x. 2.

The prophecies now in part accomplished, by the destruction of the Temporal Power of the Roman Pontiff, give us an earnest, an evidence of the certainty of the destruction of his Spiritual Kingdom over the Hearts and Consciences of men; which shall be effected at its appointed season: And while this fulfilment of Prophecy confirms *our* Faith, it will *gradually* work on the members of the Church of Rome to renounce their errors; to repent of, and to forsake their idle Superstitions, and heathenish Idolatry. For we may assure ourselves that since the *Head* of this Beast, whom they worshipped—that is, his *Temporal Power*—is destroyed; his *members* will not long survive—that is, the extinction of his *Spiritual Tyranny* will in due time ensue. But as his rise was gradual, so, 'tis probable, his fall will be gradual.² And when the whole World shall see the prophecies against this idolatrous Church fulfilled, the Pagan, the Jew, the Mahometan and the Deist shall be brought to the knowledge of the Truth, and to a Belief in one *sole* Intercessor—their God and Saviour Jesus Christ: Then shall all nations admire and adore the wisdom of God in the Presidency of his Providence:² Then will it be seen that all Nature is subservient to the Purposes of *His* Will, *Who* thus causeth Good to arise out of Evil; and the mighty operations of that Hand, which at first brought Light out of Darkness, shall then be proclaimed and acknowledged throughout the World.

To return to the intention of this Day's Solemnity, and to conclude. In the instance before us of a whole nation rescued, as ours hath been, and not only now but often heretofore from the hand of the Enemy, let the exaltation and sincerity of our praise bear some proportion to the greatness of our deliverance! Let us not at the moment only, while the mercy is before our eyes, and fresh in our minds—like the Israelites of old—"believe his words, and sing praises unto God" who saveth us; and then, "within a while, forget his works, and not abide his counsel;" but let us preserve a just and *lasting* sense of his goodness in our minds
and

² Note I. Appendix.

² Note II. Appendix.

and memories ! Let us express a constant Thankfulness by fervent piety and zeal in God's service, with a *sober* enjoyment of his good creatures ! For, believe me, this is not designed as a Day of Riot and Intemperance, but of religious rejoicing, in devout commemoration of God's mercies towards us. Here we may safely follow the antient people of God, the Jewish nation ; for, as Fasting was amongst them always joined with Prayer and Alms-Deeds, so their seasons of Public Festivity and Rejoicing were always ushered in by the Offices of Devotion, by religious hymns, and pious offerings ; in which the Poor, " the Fatherless, the Stranger " and the Widow,"^b were never to be forgotten.

^b Deut. xvi. 11.

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

NOTE I.—“ *His fall will be gradual.*”

WE seem to be at that period of time, which is called in the figurative language of Prophecy, *the fifth Vial* “poured out upon the seat of the Beast”—when his Kingdom is described as full of darkness, Rev. xvi. 10.—Fleming, in his “Discourse on the Rise and Fall of Papacy,” written almost a century back, conjectured [for he modestly termed his apocalyptical thoughts of the predictions not *then* fulfilled *conjectures*] that “the fifth Vial, which is to be poured out on the seat of the Beast, or the dominions that more immediately belong to, and depend upon the Roman See, will probably begin about the year 1794, and expire about A. C. 1848.” And upon how sound a foundation the scheme of his Exposition is built one may judge from the events of the last ten years. But a modern expositor, Mr Wrangham, in his Sermon preached at a Visitation held at Scarborough, on June 5th of the present year, seeming to overlook the period of the Sixth Vial, and *anticipating* that glorious event, the destruction of Antichrist, asserts that “Rome is fallen;” and that “The great Earthquake”—probably Political Commotions and Revolutions of States and Kingdoms—*has* happened. But, unfortunately for this Assertion, “the *great Earthquake*” is expressly predicted to happen under the *seventh* Vial: Rev. xvi. 18.—Hence, according to Mr W.’s scheme of Interpretation,^c the events arranged under the sixth Vial [comprehending in it Mahometan Antichrist] which are to take place prior to *this* “great Earthquake,” appear to have been overlooked by him. Besides, we read of the Emissaries of the *Beast*—*not yet destroyed*—and of his Adherents’ being sent out under the title of “Frogs,” to pervert the nations, *under the sixth Vial*. But—more clearly to state the grounds of dissenting from Mr W.’s Assertion that the predicted fall of the Beast *is accomplished*—from the “great Earthquake,” at the *close*, probably, of “the second Woe,” verse 13. of chapter xi.—which chapter gives us a summary view of the contents of the “little book” that begins to unfold itself at chapter xii.—to that “very great, and mighty earthquake” under the seventh vial (chap. xvi. 18.) which is the *consummation* of all, and pours utter destruction upon Papal Rome and her Adherents—some intervals must be allowed to the distinct periods of the six intermediate Vials; which are to be considered as *so many steps* to the *absolute* extinction of Popery, and are all comprehended under the seventh Trumpet, or third Woe.

Now,

^c Dr Valpy also, in his Sermon preached August 13, before the Reading and Henley Associations, &c. and Mr King, in his *Signs of the Times*, determine the present year 1798 to be the year predicted of the destruction of the Papal Power.

NB. Pope Pius vith a Prisoner in France this year 1798 an event which seems to have confirmed the opinion of the above expositor.



Now, since, as was before observed, we appear to be arrived at the period of the fifth Vial, and, consequently, are still to expect the accomplishment of those great Events, which are prophetically described under the sixth Vial—whether the destruction of Mahometism and the Turkish Empire, or the Conversion and Return of the Jews to their own Country; or whether *both*^d be there intended—whatever the Events may be—in which, evidently, the Eastern nations will be involved, but which at present can be *only conjectured*, because *none have yet* happened to justify an interpretation of, or application to this sixth Vial—we may fairly conclude that we are *not yet* arrived at the *absolute* extinction of the Antichristian Beast of Rome, but only at that period which is a Prelude to it.

“In regard to the obscurity of prophecies not fulfilled,” Bishop Newton observes, Dissert. Vol. II. page 412. 8vo Edit.—“Obscurities there are indeed in the prophetic writings, for which many good reasons may be assigned; and this, particularly, because prophecies are the only species of writing, which is designed more for the instruction of future ages, than of the times wherein they are written. If the prophecies had been delivered in plainer terms, some persons might be for hastening their accomplishment, as others might attempt to defeat it: Men’s actions would not appear so free, nor God’s Providence so conspicuous in their completion. But though some parts are obscure enough to exercise the Church, yet others are sufficiently clear to illuminate it; and the obscure parts the more they are fulfilled, the better they are understood. In this respect as the World groweth older, it groweth wiser. Time, that detracts something from the evidence of other writers, is still adding something to the credit and authority of the prophets. Future ages will comprehend more than the present; as the present understands more than the past: And the perfect accomplishment will produce a perfect Knowledge of all the prophecies.”

But “to explain this Book”—the Book of Revelations—“*perfectly*,” as Bishop Newton observes—“is not the work of one man, or of one age; and probably it will never all be clearly understood, till it is all fulfilled.”—Dissert. on the Proph. Vol. II. Page. 152.

The Reflections, that follow in the next page of the last cited Work, are so much to our purpose, and so useful, that it is better to run the hazard of censure for the immoderate length of this Note, than, by a simple reference, to suffer the Reader, through his Inability, or Neglect of turning to the Original, to lose such valuable instruction.

“Not that this Book is therefore to be despised, or neglected. They, who censure or dissuade the study of it, do it for the most part, because they have not studied it themselves,
“and

^d See J. Mede’s Works, page 529 folio, 3d Edit.

“ and imagine the difficulties to be greater than they are in reality. It is still *the sure word of*
 “ *prophecy*; and men of learning and leisure cannot better employ their time and abilities, than in
 “ studying and explaining this book, provided they do it as Lord Bacon adviseth, ‘ with great
 “ wisdom, sobriety and reverence.’ Lord Bacon adviseth it with regard to all the prophecies,
 “ but such caution and reverence are more especially due to this of St. John. ‘ The folly of
 “ Interpreters has been’—as Sir Isaac Newton observes—‘ to foretel times and things by this
 “ prophecy, as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness they have not only
 “ exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt. The design of God was
 “ much otherwise. He gave this and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men’s
 “ curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but that, after they were fulfilled, they might
 “ be interpreted by the event, and *his own* providence, not the *interpreter’s* be then manifested
 “ thereby to the world.’ ”

NOTE II.—“ *the Presidency of his Providence.*”

IN what has been urged respecting the gradual unfolding of this mysterious book, and the distinct periods of the fulfilling of its prophecies, the chief end, which the author of these strictures has in view, is to lead his readers to the study of the *whole*, as well as to the investigation of those parts of the Apocalypse which comprehend the *Present Time*. As his attempt towards an explication of *prophecies yet necessarily obscure*, may be falsely grounded, so he holds himself open to conviction: But, however, whether right or wrong, which must be determined by events, he trusts that even his imperfect representation of subjects, so highly interesting, will encourage some of those, into whose hands this Discourse may fall, to a diligent perusal of that sacred volume; that they might share in the blessing so emphatically annexed to the study of it—“ Blessed is he that readeth, &c.” Rev. i. 3.—And, while the prophecies are compared with, and seen fulfilled in succeeding events, as the page of History records them, *proofs new and unexpected* arise of *God’s superintending providence* in the government of the World—*proofs*, that are daily growing to an *irrefragable Evidence of the Truth*.

And, in respect to what is advanced in page 10. of the Sermon, that—no good member of the Community will disturb *the settled order* of things—the author would not be understood as if he meant to *preclude Improvement*; all the avenues to which—whether it be Improvement in *Religion, Morals or Politics*—whether in *Church or State*—he would have kept ever free and open: For, *human Systems*, and with *these only* he is here concerned, being ever of themselves imperfect, should still be advancing towards higher degrees of perfection. The point, then, he laboured, and what he intended is purely this, that, *no good man will make either Religion or Politics an Instrument of Faction*.



F I N I S.